

As 2009 draws to a close and 2010 rapidly approaches, we have the perfect opportunity to reflect on our successes and prioritize our goals for the next year. I know that 2009 was filled with adversity and triumph for the members of our wing. We struggled with and overcame some losses and we had some great achievements. Col Tim Hansen was recognized as the NCR Incident Commander of the Year. Chaplain Colby was recognized as the NCR Chaplain of the Year. Emerald City Composite Squadron's ground team earned NCR Ground team of the Year and Capt Mark Lahan was named Cadet Programs Officer of the Year for NCR. We raised several thousand dollars in funds and grants to support efforts in communication and our other missions. As you know, the wing strategic plan is based on CAP's nine goals. For this column, I want to focus on some areas our wing did very well in and some in which we need to continue to work for improvement.

Kansas Wing has had a very good year for recruiting and retention. We end 2009 with a sizeable increase in membership. In fact, long term membership statistics show we are at 119% compared to this time last year. This means that over the last year the wing grew by almost 20%. To all those recruiters out there—good job and keep up the great work! Kansas Wing added three new units in 2009: Hays, Ellsworth, and Cunningham. Diligent effort by Lt Leighton Davis and Lt. Denise Davis should result in a new charter in Chanute and Independence. Look for Southeast Kansas Composite Squadron to charter in early 2010. We are also working to move west and have started looking at the possibility of chartering a new unit in Colby.

A second area of strength is professional development and training. Kansas Wing is certainly working toward having the best trained seniors. In 2009, 19 Kansas Wing members completed SLS, 12 completed CLC, 25 completed Training Leaders of Cadets, 21 completed the Unit Commander's Course. Kansas Wing members also attended the Region Chaplain Staff College, Region Staff College, and National Staff College, and the Senior Inspector General course. Our efforts in aerospace education resulted in more than 30 Yeager Awards being completed in 2009. I encourage you all to take advantage of training opportunities in 2010 and to increase your knowledge.

Third among our strengths is our cadet program. Kansas Wing cadets garnered 13 Wright Brothers Awards, 13 Mitchell Awards, and six Earharts in 2009. What does this mean? It means we are going to have an amazing 2010! In addition to the milestone awards, we hosted a winter encampment with cadets from eight states and four regions present. Over 100 personnel trained between 26 December and 3 January. Our encampment doubled from 2008 to 2009. Kudos are due to the planners and staff for their outstanding work in cadet programs. Kansas also sent cadets to numerous special activities such as National Blue Beret, National

Flight Academy, Cadet Officer School, Aircraft Maintenance and Manufacturing Academy, and Hawk Mountain Ranger School. In addition, Kansas supported several national activities with vehicles and staff as well as hosting an IACE contingent. We also had a team participate in the CyberPatriot competition. The Kansas Wing CAC continued its growth in 2009 and is now one of the most active in the North Central Region. I believe we are on our way to making our cadets the best trained and most experienced youth leaders in the nation. Thanks to all those who have worked hard to support the cadet program in the wing. I know Major Eaton has been working hard on planning for 2010.

The last strength that I will mention is safety. Kansas Wing is proud of its safety culture. While everyone talks about this concept, I believe we actually have it in our wing. We measure our efforts and work hard to improve our record. Our emphasis in this critical area has led to 75 members completing the Basic Safety Officer Course, 200 completing the Basic Operational Risk Management Course, and 120 completing the Intermediate Operational Risk Management Course. Ten CAPF78s were completed in calendar year 2009—five involving vehicles and five involving personnel. The five CAPF78s involving vehicles included three damaged by hail, one damaged by a rock, and one that was backed into by a non-CAP driver. The five CAPF78s involving personnel included two members who reported to activities with pre-existing conditions, a minor cut, a bump on the head, and a shoulder injury. Kansas Wing provided more than 60,000 hours of volunteer service in 2009 and drove more than 123,000 miles. I am proud that our safety efforts and that only three of our incidents were preventable items. Let's keep up the good work in 2010. As we say in Kansas Wing, "Mission first, safety always."

While we have had many successes in Emergency Services and Operations, I feel like this is an area of opportunity for the wing. We have executed missing person searches, ELT searches, and American Red Cross transportation missions and Kansas had 12 finds in FY2009. However, we are still short in mission critical personnel. In 2010, I would ask you to embrace the training opportunities we provide and grow your skills in this crucial area. We need more pilots flying the aircraft and qualified for missions. We also need more Incident Commanders and mission base staff. In 2010, we are going to try to offer training at different locations so that travel is lessened and more people can participate. Take advantage of this opportunity to increase your skill level. We need you on our ground teams and aircrews! One of CAP's goals is to provide the best quality training with sufficient availability to support CAP's missions. Another is to be the "resource of choice" for agencies requiring HLS, SAR, DR, and other operational missions.

A second focus in 2010 has to be on aerospace education. Capt Michael Maynard has joined the wing staff and is enthusiastically embracing his new role as Director of AE. I would ask you to support him and our mission in this area. Remember—CAP has three missions and it is our duty to support them all. We may prefer one over another, but we must support all three. I

would encourage you to have Model Rocketry for your cadets, to work with the wing planners on orientation flights, and to participate in the AEX or ACES program in 2010. I challenge every unit to improve its participation in this mission in 2010.

A third focus in 2010 needs to be in the area of Public Affairs. We must tell the CAP story if we are to garner support from our communities and to be better known for our missions. These efforts will pay off in more missions and in recruiting. CAP offers some amazing opportunities for its members and CAP volunteers do amazing things—we must tell that story. Capt Michael Mathewson has helped us get space in the Plains Guardian newspaper. We must take advantage of opportunities like this one and share our efforts. Each unit needs to focus more on Public Affairs efforts in 2010. I would like to see every squadron with a PAO and every PAO producing articles for local newspapers. This is an area in which we can improve.

Finally, we must focus on fundraising and collaboration in 2010. Our efforts in 2008 and 2009 were successful but it requires diligence to maintain those sources of funding. I encourage you all to keep applying for grants locally and keep referring potential funding sources to the wing. One area where our wing could improve is in the execution of the Wreaths Across America Program. While this program involves public affairs and cadet programs, it is also an excellent fundraiser. I would like to see increased participation in 2010. They say the key to success is to start early and plan. We are looking for someone to lead the wing's efforts in this area. If you are interested in assisting with Wreaths Across America, please contact Major Eaton.

In short, 2009 brought with it many challenges and many opportunities. I am proud of the effort the wing made to take advantage of the opportunities and to overcome the challenges. Kansas Wing is a like a family in a lot of ways. We can rely on each other when times are difficult and we can do great things when we work together. Thank you for all you did in 2009 and I look forward to working with all of you in 2010.